

THE
HEARTS
OF MEN

†
By
D. S. Cairns
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INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT
OF NORTH AMERICA
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Extracts from
"The Army and Religion"

by
PROFESSOR D. S. CAIRNS

With Introduction by
SHERWOOD EDDY

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INTRODUCTION

A remarkable book has just been issued in England on "The Army and Religion," edited by Professor D. S. Cairns of Aberdeen. An edition has been published in America by the Association Press, and with its kind permission, the extracts in this pamphlet are printed.*

The book arose from a questionnaire, sent to the officers, men and hut workers in the armies in France, especially in the British Army. The book is based upon nearly 300 memoranda and upon the evidence of many hundreds of witnesses of all ranks, from generals down to privates, from chaplains, war workers and committees appointed at the great base camps of the armies in France and England.

It must be remembered that these armies constituted the young manhood of the nations in arms. The war, by a lightning flash, revealed in its lurid light the hearts of men. It showed how far the churches had reached or failed to reach the manhood of these nations. The replies from hundreds of witnesses go to show that the majority of the men were outside the churches, unreached by them and practically unevangelized. They are filled with deep lessons and with suggestive material of great value both for ministers and laymen. These documents and testimonies of the men themselves constitute a remarkable revelation of the human heart. While most of the replies deal primarily with the British Army the findings are equally applicable to America. The first half of the material, under Part I, deals with diagnosis; the last half, in Part II, with the cure.

* "The Army and Religion," 447 pages, price \$2.00. Association Press, 347 Madison Avenue, New York City.

The Questionnaire sent to the soldiers and workers contained the following:

1. *What the men are thinking about religion, morality and society.* "What faiths and standards are the men living by? Do they take a material view of life and morality, and if so, have you any opinion as to the cause of it? What are the limitations and weaknesses shown by the men, and, in consequence, what are the difficulties which the Christian church has to face in her work for the Kingdom of God? What do the men criticise in the present social order? Have they, as a whole, any clear idea of what the Christian religion is? What do they think about Jesus Christ?"

2. *The Changes made by the War.* Has the war made any real difference in their moral and religious outlook and character? Has it made them think more deeply? Has it made any new difficulties of belief for them, or made them more open at any points to religious appeal? Are the men interested in how to bring about a better world and an enduring peace?

3. *The Relation of the men to the churches.* What percentage would you say are vitally related to any of the Christian communions? What are the hindrances keeping them out of the churches? What do they really think of the churches? Do they look at all to the church for help in facing the social and national problems of the future? What kind of help do the men need and look for from the church, and what changes in the churches' methods would be necessary to meet those wants?"

The replies from hundreds of witnesses and the experience of many hundreds of workers among the men, showed on the one hand that there were vast potentialities of good, unsuspected depths of heroism, sacrifice, unselfishness, good cheer and comradeship in these men. The material showed how truly great was the raw stuff of

humanity, how noble and how well worth winning these men are. But, on the other hand, it showed the poverty of their past spiritual life, how unready they were to stand the strain of the war; and it showed a vast epidemic of profanity and wide-spread immorality.

Large masses of the men constituting the four-fifths who were unreached by the churches before the war were found to have an innate belief in God, a vague theism which expressed itself in prayer in times of danger. They had an instinctive reverence for Christ and an intuitive sense of a life beyond, coupled with a vague fatalism. But, on the other hand, the majority of these men did not know God as Father; they did not know Jesus Christ either in His heroic manhood, nor as Christ Crucified, revealing the very heart of God the Father, nor Christ as risen in power to save and keep them "more than conquerors" in the midst of temptation.

In the replies to the questions the men have spoken out frankly in their criticism of the churches, showing that they believe they are largely out of touch with reality, with humanity, with labor and with the unprivileged masses. They say frankly that the divided church has failed to speak with one voice on the great moral issues, that it failed to prevent the war, failed to meet their needs during the war, and does not today present a challenging program which can command their loyal allegiance or which calls them to live and dare with the same high spirit of sacrifice which they showed in the war.

The whole evidence constitutes a call for the church to return to God, for all the Christian forces to unite on some challenging program, to find a new and stronger faith in the power of the living Christ and to gird themselves to the great task of winning the youth of the nation for the real service of the Kingdom of God. We

have been accommodating ourselves to circumstances instead of accommodating ourselves to God. The war showed the vast, latent capacity for heroism and sacrifice in the men. We must consummate this great crucifixion of humanity by a spiritual resurrection.

The following pages are taken from the answers of the men and workers at the front and the conclusions based upon them reached by Professor Cairns and the large committee of Christian workers among the soldiers in France and England.* Space has prevented giving continuous or full quotations from this book of more than 440 pages; only brief excerpts of Professor Cairns' own words are given in this pamphlet and without quotation marks. The selections in quotation marks are from the men and workers at the front and, as far as possible, we have let them speak for themselves.

SHERWOOD EDDY.

THE AIM AND SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

The vast conflagration of the war has lit up the past for us with a revealing flame. The weak and the strong things in the life of each nation have been dragged to the light. We never knew before the depth of heart of our own youth. Nor, it may be added, did we realize as we should, how poor was the use we were making of that human material, how grave were the defects of our educational systems, the anarchy and materialism of our industry and commerce. Now that the war is over, there will be great and far-reaching changes, as the result of the new knowledge, in the whole structure of the national and international life of Christendom.

* The facts and conclusions in this report are strikingly verified in the American investigation, "Religion Among American Men as Revealed by a Study of Conditions in the Army," by the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook, published by Association Press.

It is not too much to say that the army contained the flower of the young manhood of the nation. Like Grant's veterans, these men will dominate the future of our nation and shape its destinies for a generation to come. The war was a veritable apocalypse of youth, the taking away of a great veil that had fallen between us in the churches and the men who stood aloof. Who were these men? The chapters which follow will show that a great preponderance of them were men who "had no use" for any of the churches, who were under an extraordinary misunderstanding as to what the Christian religion really is, who, instead of faith in the Son of God, had a dim notion that Jesus Christ was the best of men who died long ago, and to whom the very idea that He was alive today and able to help them in their hour of need, was a mere dream.

PART ONE

THE FACTS

I THE RELIGIOUS IMPACT OF THE WAR

ONE writes: "The Army of today is not a class apart; it is the nation, within certain limits, in arms. To ask for the Army's opinion on religion is to inquire into the views of this nation."

Broadly speaking, the evidence shows conclusively that at the front the impact of danger awakens the religious consciousness even of the most unlikely men. The men of the armies, however dim their faith may be, do in the hour of danger at least, believe in God, "the great and terrible God." Most men, we are told, pray before they go over the parapet, or advance in the face of machine guns and they thank God when they have come through the battle. No one who knows the history of religion can fail to see the importance even of so simple and

primitive an act of recognition of the Unseen as this. It is an implicit repudiation of that material view of life which is being judged in the thunder and flame around the men who pray. "The soldier has got religion, I am not so sure that he has got Christianity," was the saying of one.

A chaplain who served in the ranks describes his own experience thus: "Two convictions possessed me. The first was the reality of God, and the other the absolute impossibility that so great a thing as life, as we are experiencing it, could come to an end with death. In times of danger men cry out to God. They have had, perhaps for the first time, a certain religious experience; it is a foundation for further building."

An officer interprets the average irreligious man's thoughts as follows: "As he draws near the line for the first time, he becomes growingly aware that he has missed something vital in life; he becomes aware of this need for God, but he does not know how to find Him. He resolves that if he comes through alive, he will seek till he finds. He prays in the hour of battle. But when he goes back to the rest camp or the base he forgets and often yields to temptation."

The marked drift of the evidence is that, taken as a whole, the men vaguely believe in the life to come. "Mostly the men believe in God and a vague future life."

From a brigadier-general: "To nearly all of us, I think, it is not that we believe in a future life, but that *we know* that there is a life beyond death. This is where we shall all be open to religious appeal, and where the churches will have a great chance."

What we have to realize is that with most there is not so much a revival of religious faith as a revival of a new interest and a sense of need. This is what constitutes the opportunity.

II THOUGHTS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

THERE is no point in our whole inquiry that is more central than the endeavor to discover the average soldier's mind about Jesus Christ. To find out this, we put three questions. We asked directly what the men thought about Jesus Christ, and in the inquiry as to "points of contact" we asked what they thought of the Cross and of the living Christ.

The Personality of Christ

There is practically universal respect and even reverence for Jesus Christ. He is recognized by all the thinking men as the best of the race, though the heroic side of his character is largely unknown and it is clear that of Jesus as the Son of God and as the Atoning Sacrifice for the world, they have little or no knowledge.

From an officer: "The message of Christ has clearly never reached the great majority of the men at all."

From a hut worker: "Christ is a far-off, historical character, a great ideal of clean living, the background to our child prayers, the beautiful beneficent figure in art productions, but He has nothing to do with the daily round."

From a staff chaplain: "I think the appeal of Jesus is seriously hindered by the unreality and sentimentality of our traditional presentation. He remains remote, until we can show that the ideals of the average man are summed up and perfected in Him."

Unless we can succeed in showing the greatness and heroism of the character of our Lord, there may be a great breaking away even from such faith in Him as they have. The cause of it is that such religious knowledge of Him as they have is largely a survival from childish days.

The Cross

We find a new appreciation of the marvel of the Cross.

It is clear that before the war it must have had little meaning for most of the men, but suddenly it has crossed their path and has won a new, strange meaning, a meaning thrilling with memories of pain and honor and faithful love. It is safe to say that when preachers speak to them henceforward about the Cross of Christ, the word will have a new depth and wealth of meaning associated with it.

From a sergeant: "The Cross! What could not the churches do for the world, if they could only connect the symbols Christ gave us with the knowledge that is within the hearts of the people? There must be more known about suffering and sacrifice now in the hearts of men than at any past time, but it is all isolated, disconnected, hidden out of sight."

A sergeant in the Regulars who had seen disease and death in many camps, referring to a crowd of gas patients, said: "This sort of thing makes me want to suffer everything for everyone once and get it over." Sergeant C. was not very religious nor thoughtful yet he expressed in these few words the Christian instinct of "greater love." Another sergeant says: "The Cross made it possible for one to go on, as one felt it was worth while if God could suffer and die for all this sin."

The Living Christ

It is not too much to say that this great multitude of men, representing, according to the general drift of our witnesses more than four-fifths of the younger manhood of the nation in the armies, do not seem to have so much as heard that there is a Holy Spirit through whom they may know the presence of Christ. Or if they have heard, they have not understood.

From a gunner: "Men look on Christ as an historical figure, not as a living and present Redeemer." From an officer: "The Living Christ is a mere phrase to the men."

"They are always very anxious to tell you," writes an officer, "that they do not believe anything about Christ as the churches taught, though they admit that they owe their religion to Him. Somehow the center and core of religion are there. He stood for the fulness of man's stature and the greatness of God's love."

The practical religion of these men, so far as it is operative at all, is a kind of vague theism, what one of our witnesses has called "a blind, incoherent faith in a great, unseen benevolence." It is thus in a measure suffused with Christian elements, but in the main God and Christ are severed in their minds.

It must be clear from what has been said that it is high time that the churches should resolutely set to work to clear out of the way the errors and misunderstandings that come between these men and Christ. It is intolerable that His humanity should be so veiled from them. Thus a chaplain writes: "The men largely miss Christ through lack of reliable information about Him." Another chaplain says: "I feel that the work before the churches lies largely in the full interpretation of Christ to them."

There are many indications that a faithful preaching of Christ as the Giver of power to overcome temptation and to follow His teachings would meet with an overwhelming response.

III MISUNDERSTANDINGS

AT the very bottom of the vast confusions of the present situation there is a very great amount of downright misunderstanding. If this contention can be established, then it will evidently be the Church's duty to remove those misconceptions that are responsible for so much loss and alienation.

Two questions were inserted in our list: "Have the men in general any clear idea of what Christianity is?" and

"Do they think of the Christian life as the following of negative commandments, or as a life of active good-will?"

The answers to the first question are all to the effect that the vast majority are in a condition of ignorance about the Christian religion. "They have not the foggiest notion of what it is all about." Thus, what was meant to be a solution of the riddle of life and death becomes little more than a new problem super-added to it. We shall make no headway whatever with the spiritual conquest of our nation for Christ and His Kingdom until we have allowed this tremendous fact to possess our consciousness and to dominate our thoughts and plans for the future.

To the other question, which is mainly concerned with the *ethical ideals* of Christianity, the dominant stream of evidence is to the effect that in the main the men think of Christian morality mainly as a system of negative commandments. What the Church has to do is to show these men that the religious emotion and outlook they have discovered is Christianity in embryo. The big difficulty is to get them to connect their ideals with their Christianity, if they have any. They do not see that Christ is the source of most of their ideals.

IV THE MORAL IMPACT OF THE WAR

IT is difficult to estimate the moral impact of the war. Under its terrible strain on mind and spirit there was, on the one hand, a hardening process tending to stunt the whole man and leading to reaction; the materialistic environment of the war tended to kill thought and concentrate attention on the body, to produce a craving for excitement, often leading to immorality. On the other hand, there was a brighter side. The war developed the humanity, the sympathy and the fellowship of men; it

had a broadening and deepening effect. Many were forced to think. The evidence goes to show how poorly equipped the men were spiritually and intellectually to meet the great crisis.

An officer writes: "The war has created a new tenderness between man and man, a new sense of fellowship and social sympathy." The war had also a broadening and deepening effect. A chaplain says: "I am writing broadly of the mass of men, hitherto out of touch with the churches. I am convinced that of the hundreds of men who go into action the majority by far come out affected towards good rather than coarsened. They come out realizing that there are times when they cannot get on without God; they are not afraid of Him, they flee to Him with their simple cries for strength because their surroundings are so exacting. Conscience, instinct, tells them that these surroundings are not of God's making. What a challenge to the churches! Hundreds and thousands of men returning home, having learnt the lesson that they cannot get on without God. The demand for reality in the churches will be immensely stronger after the war—and so will the impatience with trifles."

In the fierce trial of the war, among the things which have been tried and found wanting is our educational system. This applies to our secular and religious education alike. The great mass of men cannot think for themselves. "Generally speaking, they are not thinking at all. They are just carrying on." Men are usually immoral from ignorance or thoughtlessness. They drink because they are ignorant of intellectual stimulus. They swear without meaning it. They cannot use language that has any meaning. The root of the whole sexual evil also lies in the mind. The men appeared to have no mental resources to fall back upon. The Bible was to them practically a closed book. The "Word" has never been made flesh for

them. "Lost to Christ's church at the age of adolescence" accounts for much that we see in the religious condition of the men. Thus an officer writes: "The message of Christianity has clearly never reached the great majority of the men at all."

The thought with which one turns from this part of the evidence is how poorly equipped the men were spiritually and intellectually for so sudden and terrible a crisis. Church and nation ought to have done better by them. They are confused and bewildered and the more earnest minds among them are seeking after a deeper faith. To such men we must make our appeal. The real spiritual conflict is at hand. The time has come to throw the reserves into the spiritual battle in order that the freedom won in the earthly war by so vast a sacrifice of human life and happiness may be used for the building up of a nobler social order and the laying of the foundations of an associated instead of a warring world society.

V LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

THE war brought out both the strength and the weakness of the men. It revealed at once their virtues and vices. It showed a wealth of unselfishness and heroism hitherto undreamed of. It brought out the virtue of cheerfulness, devotion, comradeship, a sense of duty, courage, sincerity and humility. On its darker side, the profanity and immorality of the men was revealed. These were two aspects of the same humanity. And we must understand these men in war or peace if we are to reach them.

It is impossible not to feel the sharpness of the contrast when we turn from the comparative poverty of the religious thoughts and ideals of the men to the wealth of noble virtues which they reveal in their relationship to one another. A chaplain writes: "I was immensely impressed by the native grandeur of human nature. Unredeemed

human nature is infinitely nobler than I had dreamed. The natural man is still a bit of rare material, capable of being moulded into something magnificent." A nurse in France says: "They love giving, they bear pain patiently, they honor womanhood, they reverence goodness."

From a sergeant: "This general sharing of things, and this helping of one another is due to the fact that all are comrades. The churches have yet to realize the power of friendship. Friendship out here is one of the great sacraments of life. They are vastly sensitive to suffering or misfortune and will sacrifice themselves to the uttermost to help a 'pal,' but they perceive no connection between this tenderness and self-denial and the Christian religion. The men's conduct is finer than their creed; and their whole splendid life and death out here show that they do value ideals (though they would not admit it) above life itself. The real religion of the Army is expressed in extraordinary unselfishness and the splendid friendship between men."

What, then, do our correspondents say as to *the main moral weaknesses and limitations of the men?*

A hut worker writes: "There appears to exist a strange mixture of morals. For instance, a man will not have the slightest qualms of conscience in stealing his neighbor's blankets or rations; but in the line the same man will endanger himself to save the life of the man he has wronged."

The taint of profanity and unclean speech has obviously spread very widely throughout the armies.

We come now to what is the darkest and most tragic element and clearly also the gravest evil among our men—the sin of immorality. The line was a very much cleaner place than the base. We have to remember constantly that we are dealing with men who have been placed under monstrously abnormal conditions, and there-

fore what we are considering is not only moral evil but human pathology. But by whatever name we call it, the results are disastrous. They point to radical defects alike in our methods of home education and of Church teaching.

From an officer: "Impurity, I should almost be impelled to say, is the rule in the Army; purity the exception." From a chaplain: "No one who has lived the life of a soldier in France can doubt but that impurity is the gravest problem the churches have to face." Another says, "We make our sex problem by our neglect of sane sex education."

We have looked first at the lights and then at the shadows. We are not describing two different classes of men in this chapter, but, to a large extent at least, two aspects of the same humanity. A private writes: "There is room for tremendous hope. These men are all right at heart. When they have realized that Christ is, indeed, their great champion of right against wrong, their hero of heroes, the bravest, straightest, most loving man who ever played the game, then they will respond to Him. They are ready; I have seen their hearts. I feel that in the words of the hymn, they are waiting, 'stretched the hand and strained the sight,' for God."

VI POINTS OF CONTACT

WE are brought inevitably to inquire what are the aspects and truths of Christianity that have been found to appeal most to the men who have been passing through the furnace of the war. We give the results:

1. *The Reality and Power of God*

"The men have been up against the realities of life and there are only a few things that matter. One finds the world empty of all but life and death and God, and religion comes to its true place. Theologically most of

the men are temporarily fatalists. A new emphasis on the sovereignty of God is surely indicated here." From a private: "Most of the men are fatalists or materialists in so far as they believe that if it is their fate to get shot they will be shot. They want some strength outside themselves to keep them going. The large majority of them simply fall back on a sort of inarticulate cry to some Being whom they call God. After all 'his number's up' may be only a soldier's way of expressing the truth, 'My times are in Thy hands.'"

We must have some greater power on whom we can throw the burden. We must either throw it upon nature or upon God. Surely we are here near the deep primitive springs of all religion, that sense of dependence upon a greater Being which alone can make us independent of the world.

2. The Value of Prayer

"The value of prayer is a memory of childhood which most men retain, and to which they turn in times of crisis."

"Prayer as a natural, impulsive cry for help and security has greatly increased. Prayer as a habit of the soul is much less apparent. Most men say their prayers before going into action. Some who come out safe never say them again till next time they are in like danger. But some do, and make prayer a habit. Even in the others you have an experience to appeal to, a point of contact from which to work."

3. Fellowship

We have seen that nothing has so enriched the life of the men as the new spirit of comradeship. A chaplain writes: "I am not sure that, unconsciously, the soldier has not got more real Christianity than we realize. What he wants is *interpretation*. Taking the simple virtues and

truths that are the heart and spring of our religion, the soldier is much more nearly giving them a true place."

From an officer: "The need for unselfishness is probably the greatest lesson men will have learned from the war. If religion could be identified with this in the mind of the average man he would be no longer indifferent." A chaplain says: "They are unselfish past imagining. I could give instance after instance from my own observation. They are mightily convinced of the need for fellowship. The church had better learn it now."

VII THE MEN AND THE CHURCHES

WE have set the outlines of the mind and character of the average soldier before our readers. It is only right that we should now, with equal honesty, endeavor to discover how we in the churches appear to him. How does he explain his aloofness from our communions? What does he think of us all? We must remember that the material comes not from the men we know but from men we don't know. We are dealing with the much larger class who are without. We are seeking the way of reconciliation. For this it seems essential that we should realize what the reasons are that these men give for their indifference and alienation.

To the query in the questionnaire: "What percentage of the men, would you say, are in vital relationship with any of the churches," about four-fifths of all the numerical estimates made in reply to the above question give twenty per cent and under.

It is probable that some will find this painful to read. There is a torrent of criticism. These men, as a whole, believe that the churches are out of touch with reality and out of touch with ordinary humanity. They think them irrelevant to the real business of their lives, antiquated in their ideas and methods, and wanting in vitality

and conviction. Yet behind all this there is an implied faith that there is a very great difference between the churches as they are and the churches as they might be. The charge that these men bring against us all is that we are out of contact with God. This, little as they may realize it, is what underlies their charge of being out of touch with man. A constantly recurring note is that these men find the churches lacking in the spirit of reality. The doctrinal message is unintelligible. They do not know what it is all about. The idea prevails that the churches are afraid to face the whole truth. It cannot be too clearly realized that this charge, unless it can be met, is fatal. Let us now hear the witnesses.

From a staff chaplain: "Far more than most of us realize, the stumbling block lies in an un-Christian church and in un-Christian Christians. They feel that they miss in the church the two things which might attract them there, viz.: Reality, whatever that may be, and fellowship. The extent to which churches appear to live in and express themselves through the past is a stumbling block to the average man."

From an officer: "The multiplicity of contending creeds and competing churches, of rival sects, bodies and factions, all professing to represent the true Christian faith, bewilder the men."

They complain that the clergy and the ministry are out of touch with the men and the times, that they have a sheltered life. Constant reference is made to the inconsistency of the lives of professing Christians. What should be done about this?

From a hut worker in France: "A very small percentage of the men with whom one deals seems to have any real connection with the churches. The men do not look to the churches with any great hope that they are going to be the leaders in future progress. I am firm in my con-

viction that the first thing needed in all the churches is a new baptism of the spirit of reality. Old phrases must be abandoned and some old thoughts must be revised in the light of the facts of life." A chaplain writes: "The hindrances keeping them out of the churches may, I think, be summed up in two words, 'starch' and 'autocracy.' In my opinion it has been truly said that there has been more brotherhood in the public-house or sáloon than in the average church."

The constantly repeated complaint of the men at the front is that the churches as a whole have been and are out of sympathy with the endeavor of the working classes of the country to better their social condition. We here get down to one of the greatest and most formidable causes of the alienation of these men from the fellowship of the organized church.

From a chaplain. "The questions raised by the Labor Movement are going to occupy the minds of our young men more and more. And in that connection they feel, at present, that the church counts for nothing." Another chaplain writes: "The attitude of the churches is one of *protest* against everything of which they do not approve, and comparatively little is done by Christians to provide good and wholesome substitutes. Men feel there is nothing in the program of the churches worthy of their active support. The churches have lost their vision and spiritual vigor and their power to inspire man to great enterprise for the Kingdom of God."

Dr. Cairns concludes that the church which should have stood for the hope of the whole world and shown the nations how to throw off their misery and sin seems itself too much to have succumbed to the materialized life of the world around it. The charges imply that the radical weakness of the Christian churches today is that they are not controlled by the Holy Spirit of God, the Lord

and Giver of Life; that the materialism of the all-environmenting world has penetrated deep and far with paralyzing influence into the very tissue and blood of the church itself. They are therefore a challenge to the church to demonstrate that they are not true nor just, and it must be a demonstration not of words but of spirit and of deeds.

PART TWO

CONCLUSIONS

I REPENTANCE AND HOPE

THE evidence is now in brief before the reader. The substance has been given and we have in the closing section to narrow our inquiry definitely to the question as to how the situation may be retrieved. For retrieved it must be if the nation is to escape spiritual disaster, and if we are to reap from the sowing of so vast a treasure of precious human life that spiritual result which alone can make it worth while. We believe that the evidence in our hands is full of deep and startling meaning.

That probably four-fifths of the young manhood of our country should have little or no vital connection with any of the churches is, perhaps, the most salient factor of our evidence. Here is an alarming fact which is, surely, clear proof that something somewhere has gone gravely wrong. The very first necessity, surely, is that this situation and all that it means should be clearly recognized. The responsibility and the shame do not rest on the masses alone, but on the Christian churches as well.

The furious race for wealth, while it has led to vast aggregations of capital, has also led to an ever-deepening materialism of life. Workmen were regarded, not as human beings, but as instruments for the production of wealth. In other ages, the poor have been the stronghold

of religion, but the poverty-stricken classes of modern industrialism have to a large extent succumbed to the spirit of the age. Great multitudes have lapsed from religious membership, and we are reaping the fruits of this failure today.

Have the churches been immune from the general contagion? The contagion of practical materialism has spread to the church itself, infecting its whole outlook and poisoning the springs of its life. It is impossible to make the pursuit of wealth and pleasure the real end of life and at the same time to know the energy and joy of Christian living. "The salt has lost its savour."

In the German doctrine, the materialistic temper of the whole age found its true expression and exposure. The German doctrine of force is in truth the symptom of a world-wide malady. Now, the whole system has broken down with a crash. The world is being judged. The roots of this lie in the loss of faith in a Living God. In the end of the day there are only two alternative interpretations of life. Either all things have their origin in One who loves goodness, or in unmoral force. To meet this uprising of evil there must be a mightier uprising of all the powers of the Spirit. There must be a new birth of faith in God.

Where should such a new birth of faith begin if not in the Christian church? So trenchant a denial of God demands as trenchant an affirmation. We have to bend our energies to the complete retrieving of the whole situation, the winning of the youth of the whole nation to the service of the world-wide Kingdom of God. Is not the whole question whether we shall accommodate ourselves to circumstances or to God? The trouble is that if we accept the former alternative our thought of God will inevitably shrink. Whenever in our souls we accept as inevitable something which we know ought not to be,

our whole moral and spiritual energies wane. Whenever we take the other course, we take the way of faith. We venture ourselves on the Christian revelation of God. The more we expect of Him, the less are we likely to be disappointed. There must be a return of all Christian men to a deeper and simpler faith in God and His Kingdom. This return to God from that practical materialism into which we have fallen is the central message and inner meaning of the whole tremendous judgment of the war. It is the one way to meet the crisis of evil with such an arousal of all the forces of good as shall consummate this great crucifixion of humanity by a spiritual resurrection.

The primary ground of hope lies in the inexhaustible God, in His power and love and liberty to help men, manifested in Jesus Christ, and made available for us by His creative and revealing Spirit. Think of the great tide of youthful life and vigor that would pass through all the shrunken channels of the life of the church, if these men were won for the King of kings. What is needed is a widening and deepening of the whole outlook and aim of the churches. If we get this right, all the nobler-hearted of the men will come. They will not be able to keep away.

II RESTATEMENT—THE VITALIZING OF DOCTRINE

THE whole life of the church depends upon its fundamental faiths about God and the world and the soul, the person and work of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, the Kingdom of God, and the life to come. Where the Christian doctrines have been taught to the men they seem to have been taught as something out of relation to their lives, which has to be believed as a duty rather than as a revelation which makes reason of the riddle of human life. The church will have to put its very heart

and soul into the work of restating the great faiths by which it lives in terms which the men can understand. The frequent demand for "interpretation" is in truth a demand for the vitalizing of theology, for the restatement of Christian doctrines in terms of life.

"There is no more startling indication of the way in which the churches have got out of touch with the masses of the men than is to be found in the general ignorance of the Bible. If there was one thing which the churches ought to have been able to do, it was to show them the interest and the value of the great Book of God.

There are two points in the minds of the men, as it is disclosed in the evidence, which must form our starting point, the practically universal belief in Almighty God, and the practically universal respect for the character of Jesus Christ. If it is the practical materialism of our time that has brought the world to its present disaster, then the central necessity of the hour is the discovery and manifestation of God."

If the account given in our papers is true, the weakness in the whole religious outlook of the men is that their thought of God is not fully Christianized. The Christian interpretation of life is broken in two at this point and what we have is simply severed fragments. On one side is God—"the great and terrible God;" on the other, is the remote Jesus of history, the "gentle Jesus" of the hymns of childhood.

What is wrong with the men, as with the churches, is want of spiritual hope. Most of them have no idea that "human nature" can be radically changed. They are possessed by the idea of the impracticability of the good. Deep at the heart of this despair lies the thought that the Christian ideal is unworkable in such a world as ours, that the world in its essential nature, in its hidden depths, is not Christ's world.

Irresistibly the parallel with early Christian thought arises in one's mind. We know that then a new morality came into the world, inseparably bound up with the personality of Him who taught it. Everyone who knew Him knew that He lived it out without fault and with an amazing freedom and energy of good, and called all men to follow Him therein. Jesus made it practicable by changing men's idea of God, by Himself manifesting the Father. The Christian confession of Jesus as Son of God is not only a confession about Christ, it is an affirmation about the universe. It is an affirmation of faith that it is Christ's world, of belief in the Christ-likeness of Almighty God. On the one side was this seemingly fragile but most lovely memory of Jesus of Nazareth, and on the other side was all the vast course of nature, the glory of history, the prestige of philosophy and learning, backed by the brute power of the Roman Empire—a world of blood and steel and gold, all arrayed against the practicability of faith and love and hope, and the possibility of the Kingdom of God. New Testament writers and the early church knew with an unerring instinct the only way to maintain the practicability of the life, and that was to hold by their Lord's own witness to Himself and claim the universe as Christ's. Either He was a visionary or "the most real Being in the universe." "Who is He that overcometh the world, but He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" In a word, the Christian life was practicable only on the basis that He and the Father were one. The lost unity between Jesus and God must again be restored. There is nothing in God that is not Christ-like.

There are frequent indications in our evidence that the Cross has won a new meaning for the soldier in his own experience of the great problem of evil. They must see in it something vital linking up their lives with the Son of

Man, and with the great order of the universe. Surely there is the deepest need for the teaching that the Cross is a voluntary act of God, Who Himself in His Son freely came among men, enduring the extremity of evil. There can be little difficulty in bringing home to intelligent men the truth that vicarious suffering is the law of the universe. For it is obvious that this whole generation is a vicarious generation. They are bearing the iniquity of many past centuries and they are laying down their lives for the centuries yet to be.

III THE CENTRAL NECESSITY

THE long course of our inquiry leads us to the deep conviction that beneath all other necessities lies today the necessity for a return to Jesus Christ—the simple going back to what our Lord revealed about God and man and the future. It is not part of the genius of modern Christianity, as a whole, confidently to expect great spiritual victories. This can only mean that we have a different measurement of the conflicting forces of good and evil from that which He had. We think evil stronger and God weaker than did our Lord and His disciples. To return to Jesus Christ here means a revolution.

If for many generations any malady affected a whole race, such a race would think of its condition as normal health. When we come out as disciples in the presence of Jesus Christ, we enter, therefore, a world of new discovery of God and man, immeasurably more wonderful and beautiful than we have ever known. He is here disclosing to us the very roots of the universe. Depression in his presence is impossible. The future is lit up with promise. In the wreck of the old order we divine the beginning of the new. We have a great and hard but immeasurably inspiring work before us in the coming

years. The long battle of defense and retreat is over, the moment for a great common advance has begun. "It is impossible for the man who trusts in God not to rejoice."

The Son of Man has come to His church along the great ways of history. He is among us to lead us on to greater and worthier days.

Shall He find us sleeping? Shall He not rather find faith? Let us expect great things from God, and attempt great things for Him."

IV CONCLUSION

THUS end the observations of Prof. Cairns and the commission appointed to investigate "The Army and Religion." After reviewing the statements presented by the soldiers at the front in France, what conclusions are we in America to draw from the evidence? It is quite possible that a somewhat larger proportion of the men are connected with the churches in this country than in Great Britain, but the conditions are essentially the same in the two countries. As we review the material and survey the present conditions in America, may we not agree that the war, with its aftermath of unrest and demand for reconstruction, teaches us, among others, the following great lessons?

1. A call to return to God.
2. To discover for ourselves and to share with our generation the deeper significance of Jesus Christ in His life, death, resurrection and triumphant indwelling by the Spirit.
3. A call for the churches frankly to recognize the extent to which we have failed to win for Christ and the Kingdom the virile manhood of our nation.
4. A call to ask ourselves personally in how far we have clearly perceived and are triumphantly proclaiming and living the rediscovery of the gospel, the dynamic

good news which is the deepest need of our day, as it was in the generation of the Apostles.

5. A call to a great advance in evangelism here and now in our own country, to unite our forces, close up our divided and broken front and go forward as a living church to evangelize our nation, Christianize the social order and win the world for the Kingdom of God.

In the light of the revelations of the war and of present conditions at home and abroad, let us ask ourselves—individually each for himself—have I the joy of the good news of the enlarging life of God? Have I rediscovered for myself Christ as a living, bright reality? Have I a life so rich and glowing that I cannot help sharing it? Am I a winner of men? Is my life one of overwork or overflow? Have I a faith that is contagious? Have I a life that is worth sharing, an experience that is worth passing on? If not, is there not a problem of how to get the new life myself and how to share it with others?

The question is answered in the pamphlet "Personal Evangelism, the Greatest Work in the World." *

The present world situation constitutes a mighty challenge to America. Our nation is on trial before the bar of humanity. Of all the great allied nations, America's manpower alone is unimpaired. She possesses nearly one-third of all the wealth of the world. By virtue of her unique position, America must bear her part in the moral leadership of the world. She must take the chief responsibility in world evangelization. She must lead the way in attempting to solve the social and industrial problems of our day.

* A booklet for training in personal evangelism, on how to win men and how to start a movement in every church has been prepared by the Interchurch World Movement. "Personal Evangelism the Greatest Work in the World." Published by the Interchurch World Movement, 45 W. 18th St., New York. Price, 5c per copy; \$2.75 per hundred.

We are summoned to the central necessity of evangelizing our own land. But are we doing this today? Several denominations report thousands of churches which in five years have gained nothing in their adult membership by addition on confession of faith. Many of the children of the Sunday school have entered the Church, but the Church is not winning the manhood and womanhood of our nation today. Let us think of the five and one-half million illiterates in our land. Let us face the fifty-eight million nominal Protestants outside of all our churches and unreached by us. Let us remember the seventeen million children of nominal Protestant families that are not in our Sunday schools.

Now let us turn from the nation to the individual congregation and our personal responsibility. Reader, are you and I winners of men? Did you win a single person for Christ last year? Is there in your church a group meeting for prayer and preparation, who are actually winning men and women for Christ? If not, is not the need of the hour to return to Christ Himself as He calls each of us today, "Come ye after Me and I will make you fishers of men."

"Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses." "Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,"





